

The Alternative

Monthly Newsletter of the Reading - Berks Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous
PO Box 184, Reading, PA 19607

Serving Districts 33, 66 & 67 of Delegate Area 59, Eastern Pennsylvania

Meeting Lists are available at Schedules@readingberksintergroup.org

October 2005



Responsibility Declaration

I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the band of AA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.

If you are not alcoholic and attend open AA meetings, you are our guest, and should not take up any time during the meeting nor attend closed meetings. Sometimes, we need to be directed and told the way things are supposed to be.

The recent "Singleness of Purpose" articles have been interesting, yet there seems to be something lacking in them. The sponsor I had for over a decade, who died in 1995 with 30+ years of sobriety, would frequently express her concern that they are emptying out the psychiatric hospitals and rehabs into AA and that we are going to have to start having secret (invitation only) meetings to have real AA Groups. *I hear that some AA's are actually having these secret meetings.*

Her fear was that they would begin to outnumber us, who actually do qualify to be an AA member. (Refer to the conference approved Pamphlet - *Problems other than Alcohol*) Then they would be the majority and our Group Conscience would no longer be ours, it would be outside people posing as AA members, making decisions on how AA is run.

It is not their fault really, because they were misinformed by someone or are ignorant of the Tradition of our singleness of purpose. I believe that there is a purpose for everything that happens under our noses. I believe that some are meant to confront folks like us and I believe some are meant to just love others regardless of what their addiction is. But most I believe, we A.A.s need to practice Love and Tolerance while guiding those others who are not alcoholic to fellowships where they can be of help to others with the same malady they have. If you are not alcoholic and have some other sort of addiction and are only attending AA meetings, you

are a guest at our meetings and are welcome to gain perspective and to take what you can use for your own recovery. You may, at some point get a strong desire to share what you find here. To try to pass on recovery from other things or addictions here in AA at the meeting level is robbing precious time that is meant for sharing our experience, strength, and hope. This time is meant for alcoholics to help each other in the saving of our own lives and the lives of the alcoholics who may not get another chance to hear what they need to recover and live.

Another injustice that is happening to you is that you are denying yourself the privilege of help those others with addictions common with your own. (See the Cleveland pamphlet "*If God would have spoken to AA, He might have said*")
[Available from akronaa.org]

The power of AA is in its singleness of purpose and the One who has all power, that one is God. These Steps can help anyone to recover from anything they choose to use them to recover from. Yet here in AA we do not want to dilute the power of our singleness of purpose. This is the real issue of concern that causes all the controversy about other addictions/problems. The people who are just drug addicts or just food addicts or just "anything else" addicts trying to become AA members. They dilute the power for those of us who have the common bond, ALCOHOLISM. I am grateful that using these Steps have promoted freedom from alcohol. The Steps have also given me freedom in many other areas of me life. But when I come to an AA meeting I am there for a primary purpose: "To stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety."

By Joyce B. Kenmore Group; IG News staff

From Akron (OH) InterGroup News Vol 51 Issue 4
Number 606 April 2005 reprinted with permission+

Archives Corner.

K.I.S. Group:

Started on October 12th, 1991; early members were: Stan S., Fred H., Tony D., Jane G.

The group arose from a Cocaine Anonymous meeting which was disbanded. They also felt the need for an inner-city "literature" type meeting. The group first met at 121 N. 8th Str., 2nd floor. They now meet at classrooms A & B of the Community General Hospital; 145 n. 6th Str. They held one meeting a week on Tuesday 6:30pm. They had alternated Big Book and Step meetings with a speaker meeting once a month.

Special problem noted was the need to move location due to the death of the landlord. His widow did not wish to continue to rent to the group.

From Your Alternative Committee We find words inadequate to express our gratitude to Alternate Chair. Roger M, Had it not been for Roger's prodigy of love and service in spite of several very intense opportunities for growth, The Alternative would not have never gotten out of the printer's box these past months. Roger has been "a man for all seasons" and a living, breathing, example of what is stated on pages 104-5 of the Twelve & Twelve* "...any experienced A.A. will tell how his affairs have taken remarkable and unexpected turns for the better as he tried to improve his conscious contact with God. He will also report that out of every season of grief or suffering, when the hand of God seemed harsh or even unjust, new lessons for living were learned, new resources of courage were uncovered and that finally, inescapably, the conviction came that God does 'move in a mysterious ways, His wonders to perform' " Thank you Roger.

*Reprinted with permission of the AA Grapevine, Inc.

IT HAPPENED AT INTERGROUP

Unity Committee: The Unity Picnic held at Gibraltar Park, was attended by well over 100 A.A.'s and their families and friends. The raffles and donations defrayed over half of the approximately \$350.00 expense.

Literature Committee: The literature packets were distributed to the groups taking the first commitment for the month to each institution. There has been a continuing response of gratitude from the staff members of the institutions.

Hotline Committee: Ted From the Hilltop Group was elected to replace Bill R., who was resigned due to having to move out of the area due to employment considerations.

Institutions Committee: Jay K., former Intergroup Chair, from Alpha Group was elected to replace Stan S. who has been incapacitated due to chronic health problems

Alternative Committee: The Alternative will be available for personal subscriptions at \$6.00 per year, starting with the January, 2006 issue... It will still be mailed to all groups at no cost. Staples quarterly 20% rebate on printing costs is being realized. We have \$17.00 in coupons from the May printing. We are anticipating over in\$100.00 rebates for June, July, and August expenses to reduce the cost of printing December's issue. Starting with this month's issue, we will be E-mailing the Alternative to the other Intergroups that have web sites, in Pennsylvania and other states that have been sharing their newsletters with us. This will result in further savings in mailing costs...

Web Site: The updated Meeting list is available and on the site.

Please submit accurate street address to the Web Servant so that map links can help people to get to your meeting.

September Donations and income to the General Fund:

- 611 Washington St. Group\$10.00;Time to Stat Living Group \$50.00; Wilshire Fellowship Group \$315.00; Lifeline Group \$72.00; Just for Today Group \$192.00; Y.A.S.N.Y Group \$200.;St. Gabriel's Tuesday Group \$60.00; New Millenium Group \$114.00; Alpha Group \$100.00 Leesport Group \$50..00 : Leesport Group \$25.00; Robesonia Fellowship Group \$360.79; Hamburg Big Book Group \$25.00 Advent Men's Group \$100.00;

September Donations to the Activity Fund:

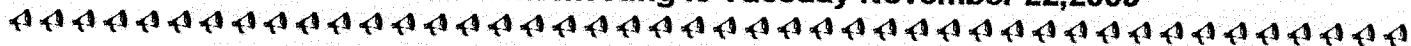
- Wilshire Fellowship Group \$35.00; St. Gabriel's Tuesday Group \$60.00; Leesport Group: \$50.00

September: Groups Represented; Book & People, Boyertown, Come as you Are Group, Courage to Change Group, Gibraltar Group, Hilltop Group, Leesport Group, Morgantown Group, Robisonia Group, Shoey Group. Spirit of Recover Group, Walnut Street Recovery Group, Wilshire Fellowship Group, District 33, District 66, District 67

Bulletin Board

Reading - Berks Intergroup meets on the 4th Tuesday of every month in The Flame Room of The UGI Building on Rt.10, also known as Morgantown Road (South of Queen City Diner) at 7:30 PM.

The next meeting is Tuesday November 22,2005



21st Annual

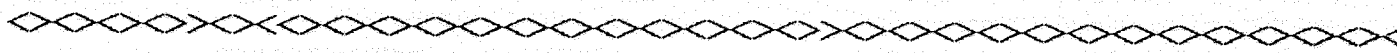
R.A.A.A.C.

(Reading Area Alcoholics Anonymous Convention)

Visit www.RAAAC.org

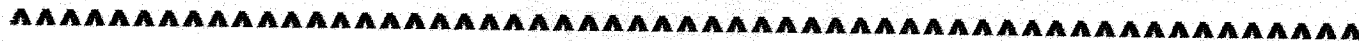
District 66 held an "Open House" for members of the AA fellowship to come and see what happens at a District meeting. As GSR (General Service Representative) for my Homegroup, I regularly attend the monthly meetings to find out what is going on in AA, as a whole, and report on how my Homegroup is doing. In addition to the District officers and GSR's, we had about 20 visitors at the Open House including the Officers from Area 59. Area 59 represents The Groups in Eastern PA at the General Service Conference, held every April in New York...

The Area 59 Delegate was invited to speak on AA's "Singleness of Purpose." He started out saying that Singleness of Purpose is basically the 5th Tradition. "Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers." He pointed out that this is mentioned in various conference-approved brochures, pamphlets, the 12x12 and the Big Book printed by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc... After the presentation, the group discussed how some regular "Open Discussion" AA meetings become "Anything Allowed meetings" It is up to Homegroup members to bring the meeting back to the topic related to Alcoholism and Recovery, from the Conference Approved Literature. If we forget our Primary Purpose the newcomer may never hear The Message of Alcoholics Anonymous. Craig B Alpha Group GSR



WATCH THIS SPACE IN FUTURE ISSUES

Editor's Note: There will be information from each of the Three Districts served by Reading Berk Intergroup.



There is a continuing need for experienced, sober members of the fellowship to carry the message of A. A. to those in need, behind the walls of Berks County Prison. There is a special need for women volunteers and men and women who speak Spanish or are bilingual. Applications are available from the web site and from the chairperson.

Donations of Grapevines and other Conference Approved Literature are also needed. Used items are OK as long as they are intact and in readable condition. Individuals can pass them on to their Intergroup Representative to be carried to the Intergroup meeting or contact the Chairperson directly. Jim B at 610-337-0795. He can also be e-mailed at the web site link ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org



The Alternative is printed each month during the week after Intergroup meets and is mailed out in the first week of the next month. If you have an announcement to be printed for an event which is being held in the first week of the month it may not reach the groups in time to inform them of your event. So it is a good idea to submit your announcement so that it will appear in The Alternative a full month before your event is actually going to take place. . Contact: Glenn L 610.763.4441 or gfl878@aol.com

To The Alternative 9/30/05 via E-Mail

Those First Three Steps

Only four months into my recovery, I have been asked to write my experience with the first three steps. After spending a week in contemplation of the change that has occurred in my daily perceptions, I write the following:

Step 1

I awoke at 5:00 AM on May 10th, after three days of consuming as much "good" wine as I could lay my hands on. I could not even contemplate mustering the strength to wait until the liquor store opened. I had nothing to drink. I could not go to work. I could not go to the gym to work out at 6:00 AM, as was my custom for the last four years. My life was 100% out-of-control! I was insane! Alcohol ruled my every thought! I was an alcoholic!

Afraid to leave the house, I stayed in bed or in "my chair" until Thursday. I shook constantly. I was terrified of the overwhelming desire to drink. I managed to get to the Doctor's office without stopping at the liquor store by waiting until I was going to be a few minutes late before chancing getting into my car. I was given a phone number for AA. In my car, in the parking lot, I called the number. The next, and nearest meeting, was 2 1/2 hours away, two blocks from my favorite bar and I was going to need to pass the liquor store. The man on the hotline told me to drive "the long way around" and miss the liquor store. I did as I was told and sat outside the meeting until people started to arrive. I needed help! I could not manage my life. I could not manage a day of my life.

Once inside, in the candlelight, I admitted, aloud, to others, and myself that I was an alcoholic and needed help. I needed someone or something to take control of my life.

Step 2

The realization that no human power could relieve my alcoholism and restore me to sanity took some time. I had to look back after several months of sobriety to realize the all consuming desire to drink no longer haunted my every minute. I did not carry myself through those days. I could not have done so.

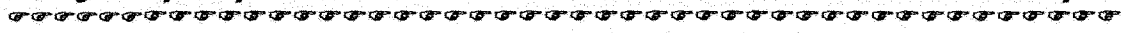
The first few weeks are a blur. Only the love of my Grandmother, whom I initially nominated as "a power greater than myself," and God could have carried me. I spoke with my Grandmother constantly, praying. One dawn, as I sat on my porch at sunrise, as I often do, I discovered God. The God of the sunrise, the sunset and the tides, whom I have worshipped since my childhood, but had never found outside of Cape Cod. For that matter, I had not realized that the strength that I gleaned from the Cape was God.

Step 3

In many ways, turning my life over to the care of God has been an easy choice. The controlling stubborn person who ran my life failed miserably. I will be tested, of this I am sure. But for now, this minute, my future is in God's hands. Hope pervades my existence. Life pleases my spirit.

I must learn to accept God's grace.

Tyler L.



New A.A. Meeting!
Safe Harbor Group (Gay)
Open Discussion Meeting
Fridays 8:00 PM
St Albans Episcopal Church
Van Reed Road & Wilshire Blvd, Sinking Spring

OCT 2005 - Reading-Berks Intergroup

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 Prison-Men's 7:00 pm <hr/> Alternative Committee Mgt.8:00 pm	4 Prison- Women's 7:00pm	5	6	7	8
9 Multi-District WORKSHOP IBEW Hall Collegeville	10 Prison- Men's 7:00 pm	11 Prison- Women's 7:00pm	12 <u>DIST 67</u> 7:30 pm	13 <u>DIST 66</u> 7pm	14	15
16	17 Prison- Men's 7:00 pm	18 Prison- Women's 7:00pm	19	20	21	22
23	24 Prison- Men's 7:00 pm	25 Prison- Women's 7:00pm <hr/> Reading Berks Intergroup Mtg.. 7:30 PM	26	27	28	29
30 District 33 12:15 PM	31 Prison- Men's 7:00 pm					

Dist 33 meets at the Muhlenburg Rec Center, 3025 River Rd. Reading 12:15 p.m.

Dist 66 meets at St. Peter's U.C.C. Church, Dwight & Curtis Aves. W. Lawn 7:00 p.m.

Dist 67 meets at St. Marks Luth. Church, 5 Brook Manor, Birdsboro. 7:30 p.m.

The Archives Committee meets at 2900 Grandview Bl. (corner of Dwight & Grandview) In West Lawn.

The Alternative Committee meets at -West Lawn United Methodist Church Penn & Woodside Aves, West Lawn, PA

The Reading-Berks Intergroup Representatives s meeting is held at the UGI Building Flame Room. On PA Route 10. Also known as Morgantown Road (Approximately 1/2 mile South from

Queen City Diner) **All Interested A.A.. Members are invited to attend**

We exist as a central office to serve A.A. groups in the Reading-Berks Area. We have no outside affiliations.

Intergroup Staff

Chairperson: Bob C. 484-332-4660
 Secretary: Alija S. 610-777-3660
 Hotline: Ted L. 610-373-1456
 Alternative: Glenn L. 610-763-4441
 Women's Prison: Open
 Archives: Grace C. 610-927-1422
 Unity: Roger M. 610-582-3534
 Bridging the Gap: Terry McF. 610-944-3167

Alternate Chair: Roger M. 610-582-3534
 Treasurer: Stephanie K. 610-678-8117
 Schedules: Greg G 610-562-0507
 Books & Literature: Kim S. 610-944-1692
 Men's Prison: Jim B. 610-334-0795
 Institutions: Jay K. 610-376-6343
 Spanish Liaison: Angel R. 610-372-2438

Website: info@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org

Alternative Email: alternative@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org

12 Step Commitments

Caron Adolescent Extended Care-MEN Sunday @ 7PM	Caron Adolescent Extended Care-WOMEN Sunday @ 7PM	St Joseph's Mental Health Unit 5 th floor, 13 th & Walnut Streets, Reading Mondays @ 7:00 PM
10/2 OPEN	10/2 OPEN	10/3 OPEN
10/9 Dist.33	10/9 Intergroup Treasurer	10/10 Walnut St Group
10/16 Hilltop Group	10/16 Hilltop Group	10/17 DIST 66
10/23 Young People's Group	10/23 Young People's Group	10/24 OPEN
10/30 OPEN	10/30 Boyertown	10/31 Wilshire Group
11/06 Dist. 33	11/06 OPEN	11/07 Walnut St. Group
Wernersville State Hospital See Guard in Bldg. 34 Mondays @ 7:00 PM	Reading Detox Unit Tuesday @ 8:00 PM	Reading Detox Unit Thursday @ 8:00 PM
10/3 OPEN	10/4 Come As You Are Group	09/29 Boyertown Group
10/10 OPEN	10/11 [REDACTED]	10/6 Courage to Change Group
10/17 Robesonian Group	10/18 Walnut St. Group	10/13 Wilshire Group
10/24 OPEN	10/25 [REDACTED]	10/20 Leesport Group
10/31 OPEN	11/01 Morgantown Group	10/27 Shoey Group
11/07 OPEN		11/03 Courage to Change Group
Caron Foundation Thursday @ 8:00 PM	Wernersville State Hospital Thursday @ 11:00 AM	Conewago D&A Unit Building 19, Wernersville State Hospital Friday @ 6:45 PM
09/29 Wilshire Group	09/29 OPEN	09/30 Hilltop Group
10/6 Books & People Group	10/6 OPEN	10/07 Wilshire Group
10/13 Robesonian Group	10/13 OPEN	10/14 OPEN
10/20 Walnut St. Group	10/20 Boyertown	10/21 Hilltop Group
10/27 Spirit of Recovery Group	10/27 OPEN	10/28 Books & People Group
11/03 Shoey Group	11/03 OPEN	11/04 OPEN

Please notify anyone at Intergroup if you cannot make your commitment. If you take one for your group, make sure the person scheduled to go has a substitute. For particulars on the Caron Meetings contact Glen Goodman at 610-678-2332 Ext. 2206. When sending group members to commitments, it is great to double up. Send a newer and older member and everyone will benefit.

Please make sure that someone honors your group's commitment. This could be the only exposure to the fellowship that these people have.